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ABSTRACT

The instant invention provides a method of treating an animal suffering a disease characterized by excessive apoptosis by administering a therapeutically effective amount of at least one serine protease inhibitor and thereafter monitoring a decrease in apoptosis. The inhibitor of the invention includes α_1 -antitrypsin or an α_1 -antitrypsin-like agent, including, but not limited to oxidation-resistant variants of α_1 -antitrypsin, and peptoids with antitrypsin activity. The diseases treatable by the invention include cancer, autoimmune disease, sepsis neurodegenerative disease, myocardial infarction, stroke, ischemia-reperfusion injury, toxin induced liver injury and AIDS. The method of the invention is also suitable for the prevention or amelioration of diseases characterized by excessive apoptosis.

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